

Claims:

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*27* 1. In a machine for mowing crop materials, the improvement comprising:

5 a cutter bed including a series of rotary cutters  
extending across the path of travel of the machine and rotatable about individual upright  
axes;

10 a crop discharge opening located behind the cutter bed  
for receiving severed crop materials from the series of cutters,

15 said discharge opening having a pair of opposite ends,  
said series of cutters including a group of intermediate cutters positioned in front of said discharge opening with the first and last cutters of said group being located adjacent said opposite ends of the discharge opening,

20 said series of cutters further including at least a pair of opposite end cutters located outboard of the first and last cutters of the group and outboard of said discharge opening;

means for driving the cutters of said group in oppositely rotating pairs for directing severed material between the cutters of each pair and into the discharge opening,

25 the first and last cutters of the group rotating generally inwardly toward the discharge opening across the front of the cutter bed;

30 means for driving the end cutters in the same direction as their next adjacent first or last cutter of the group such that the end cutters and the first and last cutters of the group all rotate generally inwardly toward the discharge opening across the front of the cutter bed; and

35 conveying means operably associated with each end cutter and its next adjacent group cutter for

moving cut crop materials inwardly toward said discharge opening.

2. In a machine for mowing crop materials as claimed in Claim 1,

o said conveying means including an endless conveyor belt entrained around the axes of rotation of the end cutter and its next adjacent <sup>intermediate</sup> group cutter, said conveyor belt having a generally upright, flat, front surface and being driven in a direction to move said front surface toward the discharge opening.

3. In a machine for mowing crop materials as claimed in Claim 1,

o said conveying means including an upright generally cylindrical impeller projecting upwardly from each end cutter and its next adjacent <sup>intermediate</sup> group cutter,

20 said conveying means further including an intermediate, upright, generally cylindrical impeller located between each end cutter and its next adjacent <sup>intermediate</sup> group cutter,

o said intermediate impeller being rotatable in the same direction as the corresponding end cutter and adjacent <sup>intermediate</sup> group cutter such that the impellers effectively present a forwardly facing, inwardly moving front surface for conveying cut crop materials toward the discharge opening.

4. In a machine for mowing crop materials as claimed in Claim 3,

o said intermediate impeller comprising a drum having an at least substantially solid exterior wall.

5. In a machine for mowing crop materials as claimed in Claim 3,

5       said intermediate impeller comprising a cage having a series of upright members arranged in a circumferentially spaced pattern.

6. In a machine for mowing crop materials as claimed in Claim 5,

10       said cage being suspended above and in spaced relation to the cutter bed,  
      said cage having a drive shaft therefor extending downwardly into the cage from above the cage.